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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004397

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE MIKE FOOKS, EUR/WE

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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF ITALY INTERESTS AT SEPTEMBER 25-26  
PIC STEERING BOARD MEETING

REF: A) STATE 268444 B) DONEGAN-FOOKS EMAIL

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MIL COUNSELOR GARY ROBBINS. REASON: 1.5 (B)(D)

1. (C) AS REPORTED REF B, MFA BALKANS OFFICE DIRECTOR FERNANDO GENTILINI TOLD POLOFF ON SEPTEMBER 24 THAT ITALY AGREES IN PRINCIPLE WITH US VIEWS ON PEACE IMPLEMENTATION COUNCIL STEERING BOARD (PIC SB) POINTS. HE SAID THAT ITALY HAD SOME DIFFERENCES ON TIMING AND THERE WERE SOME AREAS WHERE ITALY WOULD DEFER TO EU DECISIONS FOR SPECIFIC COURSES OF ACTION. GENTILINI HAD JUST RETURNED FROM THE BALKANS CONTACT GROUP MEETING IN NEW YORK. MFA DEPUTY DG FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FRANCESCO BASCONE WILL THEREFORE REPRESENT ITALY AT THE PIC IN SARAJEVO. GENTILINI'S OFFICE PASSED A COPY OF REF A NON-PAPER TO BASCONE PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE.

2. (C) GENTILINI SAID THAT ITALY STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE DEFENSE REFORM COMMISSION (DRC) RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AGREES WITH OUR VIEW THAT THE MOST EFFICIENT STRUCTURE FOR THE ARMED FORCES OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA WOULD INCLUDE ELIMINATION OF MULTIPLE DEPUTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH HR ASHDOWN'S PLAN. THE ITALIANS WILL WITHHOLD A FINAL DECISION ON THEIR POSITION UNTIL THEY HEAR/UNDERSTAND MORE FROM THE BOSNIANS ON THE REASONING BEHIND THE TWO-DEPUTY PROPOSAL. THEY WILL ALSO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT ASHDOWN AND OTHER PIC SB MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY. THERE MAY BE SOME COMPROMISE POSSIBLE THAT WOULD ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DRC RECOMMENDATIONS, BUT IF SOLID ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE DUAL-DEPUTY IDEA ARE TABLED, THE ITALIANS WILL JOIN US IN OPPOSING THE PLAN.

3. (C) THE ITALIANS ARE EVALUATING CONTRIBUTION LEVELS TO SUPPORT DEFENSE REFORM BUT GENTILINI UNDERLINED THAT "IT'S A TOUGH TIME FOR FUNDS," WITH IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL NEEDS DEMANDING RESOURCES. THAT SAID, ITALY REALIZES STABILIZATION IN BOSNIA IS IMPORTANT, AND WILL CONTRIBUTE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. BASCONE HIMSELF IS LOOKING FOR FUNDS WITHIN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. HE WON'T HAVE HARD FIGURES TO PUT ON THE TABLE IN SARAJEVO, BUT WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS CONTRIBUTIONS AND TO PUSH OTHER PIC SB MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE.

4. (C) ITALY AGREES ON THE NEED TO ACCELERATE PRIVATIZATIONS, BUT WANTS TO HEAR MORE FROM ASHDOWN AND THE BOSNIANS ON SOCIETAL COSTS OF THE PROCESS (UNEMPLOYMENT). BASCONE WILL LISTEN CLOSELY TO ASHDOWN'S VIEWS ON THE BEST RATE AT WHICH TO PUSH PRIVATIZATIONS.

5. (C) GENTILINI SAID THAT THE ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY WILL BE PUSHING FOR A STRONG STATEMENT IN THE NEXT EU GAC CONCLUSIONS ON CAPTURE AND PROSECUTION OF PERSONS INDICTED FOR WAR CRIMES (PIFWCS). THE QUESTION OF VISA BANS AND FINANCIAL FREEZES FOR INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTING PIFWCS IS TRICKY. ITALY WANTS SUCH MEASURES TO BE EU-WIDE AND ON SOLID LEGAL FOOTING, AND WANTS TO MAKE SURE ANY COMPLAINTS MADE TO THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE ABOUT THE BANS/FREEZES WOULD BE EASILY DISMISSED. GENTILINI SAID THAT A COMPREHENSIVE EU REPORT UNDER DEVELOPMENT AND TO BE ADOPTED AT THE MID-OCTOBER GAC WILL CLARIFY THE ISSUE, AND THE PRESIDENCY WILL SUBSEQUENTLY ACT.

6. (C) ITALY AGREES THAT CASES CURRENTLY IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMBER SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, BUT BASCONE WILL WANT TO DISCUSS HOW TO HANDLE THE 10,000 CASE BACKLOG. SPECIFICALLY, HE WILL ASK "IF THERE IS NO INTERIM CHAMBER, WILL THROWING THE CASELOAD ONTO THE MAINSTREAM JUDICIARY CAUSE UNACCEPTABLE LEGAL DELAYS FOR CASES THROUGHOUT THE COURT/LEGAL SYSTEM?"

SEMBLER

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